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of day and afford an opportunity for the large picturesque velvet hat, which in black, is sure to become most any woman. The gown, however, should be selected with careful attention to outline that it may consistently suit the figure of the wearer.

From the wearing of the afternoon street gown, a woman will probably find the change, at the tea hour, into a flowing house gown of chiffon or soft delicate crepe, her most flattering moment. The American woman has grown to appreciate the value of long classical lines in dress, which can better be expressed in this type of gown than in any that she wears.

From this she may once more emerge into brilliant colors for the evening gown of the day knows no limitation in extravagances of color or material.

As if a triumphant expression of victory, after four years of wartime repression, she may now indulge, to the utmost, her love for rich fabrics and filmy laces, which the looms of the world are once more weaving for her adornment.

Under such a spell, maturity pales and disappears and perennial youth prevails among womankind who use discretion in their dressing and hold consistency as their watchword. Age becomes no longer a factor, but a dictum of the past.

John Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln"

BY ROBERT HEDGES

T is among the paradoxes of Time that the character of Abraham Lincoln, once so cruelly lampooned by the British press, should draw crowds to Hammersmith to witness John Drinkwater's play about the great American. The London theatre hour witnesses all manner of men traveling painfully on busses on rainy and clear nights to a suburb, to hear a Lincoln who speaks with a brogue and a negro who reads lines such as never a negro read before! Which is all the more remarkable, seeing that Hammermith is where it is and *Abraham Lincoln* the sort of play it is.

Geographically speaking, Hammersmith is to London what Harlem is to New York. One doesn't go to Hammersmith unless he has a good reason for going. The good reason in this instance is a political play showing the character of Lincoln as it developed and stood out from the other characters in the Civil War chaos. There is not the slightest suggestion of a love motif in it. Of the fifty-one dramatis personæ, ten are women and only four of these are suffi-

ciently important to dignify with names. The others are men famous in that day—generals, members of the cabinet, etc.

We have been accustomed to plays about the Civil War being melodramas. *Shenandoah*, *Secret Service* and even Augustus Thomas' *The Copperhead*—melodramas all. But here is one that is not. Rather, it has the atmosphere of a morality play. Two chroniclers speak before and after each curtain. Their measured words immediately put the audience into a thinking mood. The nature of the play is such—the scenes so homely, the lines so plain, the characters so well known—that the thinking mood is necessary. The chroniclers' verses help raise the play to the level of a poetic drama. For it is more a play of the spoken word than a play of action. In that there is something Greek about its very simplicity. Each character around Lincoln would seem to represent a force developing his man-soul. The climax which comes with his assassination is also the climax of his character development. As Secretary Stanton exclaims in the last line, "Now he belongs to the

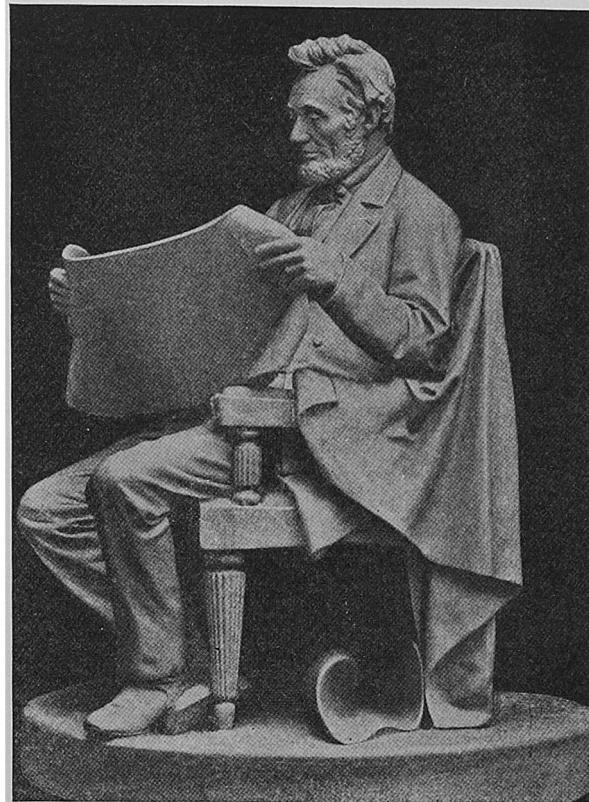
ages!" you have seen a man grow to the measure of the stature of the fulness of a national god.

The steps in this ascent are many. There are six scenes in the play—the conventional division into acts being disregarded—and in almost all of them there is at least one total change of characters. The various influences around Lincoln come and go with slow and inexorable movement—like the movement of the tides.

The curtain rises to find two of Lincoln's townsmen sitting in the front parlor of his Illinois home, smoking pipes and discussing his general personality. Mrs. Lincoln enters and is distressed to find that they have been smoking there. She is a sort of Prohibition person, thin-lipped, who worries over her husband's personal appearance and lack of clean handkerchiefs, annoys him affectionately in other ways, but understands her man and gives him the final encouragement for his serious decision. This decision is reached at the end of the first scene. The two townsmen having gone, four delegates from the Republican convention enter. They offer Lincoln the nomination to the presidency, they talk him over behind his back and withdraw contented when he finally accepts. Moved with the emotion of the great decision, Lincoln kneels to pray for guidance. That is all that happens in the first act of a play over which London has gone mad, and over which New York will soon have an opportunity to do likewise.

Let's go on with the story. The second scene shows Secretary Seward in conference with the Southern commissioners, almost persuaded by them that peace can be effected by a compromise. At this juncture Lincoln enters, receives reports from Fort Sumpter, makes his position clear to the Southerners and, failing to persuade them to his views, calls the decisive cabinet meeting at which war is the only path left open to him. Members of his cabinet disagree. He holds fast to his decision.

The third scene is a small reception in



ABRAHAM LINCOLN. SEATED FIGURE FROM THE LINCOLN GROUP BY JOHN ROGERS

the White House in which Lincoln rebuffs a war dragoness for her inhumanity. It is one of the most poignant pictures in the play—this refusal of his to shake hands with her, and his hand-hewn warning to the maid never to let that woman in the house again lest she meet with an accident. On the heels of this he receives an old darky who comes with a like request that the war be reduced to murder. And with equally, but more kindly skill Lincoln shows him where he is wrong. The scene ends with the old negro and the maid chatting about the master. Their conversation is interrupted dramatically by a crowd of people below the window singing *John Brown's Body*. In the printed version, from which these notes are made, the vernacular of the negro Custis has the strange unreality that is characteristic of the general British view of the American negro. It is to be hoped that in the American pre-

sentation these defects will be remedied. As they stand, Custis' lines are highly humorous.

Having shown him a lonely giant in



MRS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN. FROM A CONTEMPORARY ENGRAVING.

his cabinet and even in his home, we again see Lincoln at a cabinet meeting. This time to put through his bill for the emancipation of the slaves. A strange cabinet meeting this. Lincoln opens it by reading from Artemus Ward, to the great annoyance of his advisers. While the incident may have historical foundation, it is set in here in a very forced fashion. On the other hand, after the meeting which has been stormy and has torn the hearts of his advisers, Lincoln asks his secretary, John Hay, to read a passage from Shakespeare to him. It is a very natural and beautiful finale.

Scene five finds the headquarters of General Grant at Appomattox on an April evening in 1865. The final blow is to be struck. Meade is the instrument with which Grant is surrounding Lee.

Lincoln comes in with Hay. They talk over the progress of the battle. Grant brings to Lincoln's attention the case of an execution he has ordered. Visualize this! You feel the action of battle far away. A few hours, a few minutes and the ring will close around the foe. The end is approaching. Into this situation is thrown the interlude of a young lad sentenced to be executed for sleeping on guard duty. Lincoln has the boy brought in, questions him, revokes the sentence and sends him back to the line. Then Lincoln and Hay curl up on cots and go to sleep. The curtain rises again to find an orderly bringing in coffee. Lee has surrendered. In a few moments he is coming to headquarters. But Lincoln's thought is for the boy he pardoned. What became of him? Killed. And that seems to be the limit of Lincoln's interest, for he leaves the terms of surrender in Grant's hands. When Lee enters, Grant alone receives him. The terms are humane. Grant accedes to all requests. When Lee offers his sword Grant refuses it. It has been a series of tense scenes, short in duration, simple in lines and with scarcely any action. But already one is conscious that the final stroke of destiny has still to be played.

Scene Six, then. The lounge of a theatre showing the rear of some private boxes. In the center one can be seen Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln and Stanton. Susan, the servant who has been with us since the opening curtain, is there also. Young men and girls discuss the play. The audience calls for Lincoln to speak. While he is speaking—and it is a strange speech compounded of all his famous sayings—John Wilkes Booth enters. The shot is fired. And then it is that Stanton proclaimed the finished work of Fate—"Now he belongs to the ages."

A very moving drama, this, and sure of a great reception in this country. For Abraham Lincoln has long since laid aside his stove-pipe hat to take on the halo of a saint, and any action showing how he attained to that degree will command instant sympathy.